

## Under the Moons of Mars

A Wonder Romance by the Creator of "TARZAN"

By Edgar Rice Burroughs

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

The story of the adventures of John Carter, a Civil War hero, who is transported to the planet Mars. He is a man of great courage and strength, and he is the only man on Mars who is not a native. He is the only man on Mars who is not a native. He is the only man on Mars who is not a native.

## CHAPTER XII.

(Continued.)

Pursuit.

SOLA and I looked both in the direction she indicated, and there, plainly discernible, were several hundred mounted warriors. They seemed to be headed in a southwesterly direction, which would have taken them away from us.

They doubtless were returning. I was not sure, but I was sure that they were returning. I was not sure, but I was sure that they were returning.

Quickly lifting Dejah Thoris from the throat I commanded the animal to lie down and we three then did the same, presenting as small an object as possible for fear of attracting the attention of the warriors.

We could see them as they filed out of the pass, just for an instant, before they were lost to view behind a friendly ridge; to us a most providential ridge; since, had they been in view for any great length of time, they scarcely could have failed to discover us.

As what proved to be the last warrior came into view from the pass, he halted and, to our consternation, threw his small but powerful field glass to his eyes and scanned the sea bottom in all directions. Evidently he was a chief, for in certain marching formations among the green men a chief often brings up at the extreme rear of the column.

As his glass swung toward us our hearts stopped in our breasts, and I could feel the cold sweat start from every pore in my body.

Presently it swung full upon us and—stopped. The tension upon our nerves was now breaking point, and I doubt if any of us breathed for the few moments he held us covered by his glass; and then he lowered it, and we could see him shoot a glance toward the warriors who had passed from our sight behind the ridge.

He did not wait for them to join him, however; instead he wheeled his mount and came tearing madly in our direction.

There was but one slight chance, and that we must take quickly. Raising my strange Martian rifle to my shoulder I sighted, and touched the button which controlled the trigger; there was a sharp explosion, and the missile reached its goal, and the charging chief pitched backward from his flying mount.

Springing to my feet I urged the horse to rise and directed Sola to take Dejah Thoris with her upon him and make a mighty effort to reach the hills before the green warriors were upon us.

I knew that in the ravines and gullies they might find a temporary hiding place, and even though they did better to return to the hills than to the hands of the Tharks.

Forcing my two revolvers upon them as a slight means of protection, and, as a last resort, as an escape for themselves from the wrath of a man who would surely mean, I lifted Dejah Thoris in my arms and placed her upon the back of Sola, who had already mounted at my command.

"Goodby, my princess," I whispered. "We may meet in Helium yet. I have escaped from worse plights than this."

I tried to smile as I lied. "What," she cried, "are you not coming with us?"

"How may I, Dejah Thoris? Some one must hold these horses for a while, and I can better escape them alone than could the three of us together."

She sprang quickly from the throat and, throwing her arms about my neck, turned to Sola, saying with quiet dignity:

"Fly, Sola! Dejah Thoris remains to die with the man she loves."

Those words, "Ah, gladly would I give up my life a thousand times and could I only have them thus; but I could not give even a second to the capture of her sweet self, and I am pressing my lips to hers for the first time, I picked her up bodily again, and tossed her to her seat behind Sola again, commanding the latter in peremptory tones to return there by force, and then, slipping the throat upon the flank, I observed them being borne away, Dejah Thoris struggling to the last to free herself from Sola's grasp.

Turning, I beheld the green warriors mounting the ridge and looking for their chief. In a moment they saw him, and then, but scarcely had they discovered me than I commenced firing, flying flat upon the moss.

I had an even hundred rounds in the magazine of my rifle, and another hundred in the belt at my back, and I kept up a continuous stream of fire until I saw all of the warriors who had been first to return from behind the ridge either dead or hurrying to cover.

My reprieve was short-lived, however, for soon the entire party, numbering some thousand men, came charging into view, racing madly toward me. I fired until my rifle was empty and they were almost upon me, and then I turned and fled, and Dejah Thoris and Sola had disappeared among the hills. I sprang up, throwing down my useless gun, and started away in the opposite direction to that taken by Sola and her charge.

If ever Hellfire had an exhibition of jumping it was granted those astonished warriors on that day, for years ago; but while it did not distract their attention from endeavoring to capture me.

They raced wildly after me until finally my foot struck a projecting piece of quartz and I went sprawling upon the moss.

As I looked up they were upon me, and though I drew my long sword in an attempt to sell my life as dearly as possible, it was soon over. I reeled beneath their blows, which fell upon me in perfect torrents; my head swam; all was black and I went down beneath them to oblivion.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Cast Into a Dungeon.

I must have been several hours before I regained consciousness, and I well remember the feeling of surprise which swept over me as I realized that I was not dead.

I was lying among a pile of sleeping eliks and furs in the corner of a small room in which were several green warriors, and bending over me was an ancient and ugly female.

As I opened my eyes she turned to one of the warriors, saying: "He will live, old Jed."

"Tis well," replied the one so addressed, rising and approaching my couch. "He should render rare sport for the games."

And now as my eyes fell upon him I saw that he was no Thark, for his ornaments and metal were not of that horde. He was a huge fellow, terribly scarred about the face and chest, and with one broken tusk and a missing ear. Strapped on either breast were human skulls, and depending from these a number of dried human hands.

His reference to the great games of which I had heard so much while among the Tharks convinced me that I had but jumped from Furgatory into Gehenna.

After a few more words with the female, during which she assured him that I was now fully fit to travel, the jed ordered that we mount and ride after the main column.

I was strapped securely to a wild and unmanageable animal, as if I had ever seen, and with a mounted warrior on either side to prevent the beast from bolting, we rode forth in pursuit of the column at a furious pace. My wounds gave me but little pain, so wonderfully and rapidly had the applications and injections of the female exercised their therapeutic powers, and so deftly had she bound and plastered the injuries.

Just before dark we reached the main body of troops shortly after they had made camp for the night. We were immediately taken before the leader, who proved to be the jeddak of the hordes of Warhoon.

Like the jed who had brought me, he was frightfully scarred, and his face was decorated with the breastplate of human skulls and dried dead hands, which seemed to mark all the greater warriors among the Warhoons, as well as to indicate their awful ferocity, which greatly transcends even that of the Tharks.

The jeddak, Bar Comas, who was comparatively young, was the object of the fierce and jealous hatred of his old lieutenant, Dak Kova, the jed who had captured me, and I could not but feel that I was in a most perilous position.

He entirely omitted the usual formal salutation as he entered the presence of the jeddak, and as he pushed me roughly before the ruler he exclaimed in a loud and menacing voice:

"I have brought a strange creature wearing the metal of a Thark, whom it is my pleasure to have battle with a wild thot at the great games."

"What do you mean, old fellow?" the jeddak asked, and as he replied the young ruler with dignity:

"If at all," roared Dak Kova, "by the dead hands at my throat but I shall kill you, old fellow, who pushed me roughly before the ruler he exclaimed in a loud and menacing voice."

Bar Comas eyed the defiant and insubordinate chief with a look of scorn, his expression one of haughty, fearless contempt and hate, and then without drawing a weapon and without uttering a word he hunched himself at the throat of his defiant.

Bar Comas had much the better of the battle, as he was stronger, quicker and more intelligent. It soon seemed that the encounter was done, saving only the final death thrust, when Bar Comas slipped, in breaking away from a clinch. It was the one little opening that Dak Kova needed, and hurling himself at the body of his adversary he buried his single mighty tusk in Bar Comas's groin and with a last powerful effort ripped the young jeddak wide open to the full length of his body, the great tusk finally wedging in the bones of Bar Comas's jaw. Victor and vanquished rolled limp and lifeless upon the floor, a huge mass of torn and bloody flesh.

Bar Comas was stone dead, and only the most heroic efforts on the part of Dak Kova's females saved him from the fate he deserved.

Three days later he walked without assistance to the body of Bar Comas, which, by custom, had not been moved where it fell, and placing his foot upon the neck of his erstwhile ruler he assumed the title of jeddak of Warhoon.

The jeddak's hands and head were removed to be added to the ornaments of his conqueror, and then his women cremated what remained, amid wild and terrible laughter.

We remained in the city of Warhoon after some three days' march, and I was immediately cast into a dungeon and heavily chained to the floor and walls. I had no light save the light of a single candle, and owing to the utter darkness of the place I do not know whether I lay there days, or weeks, or months.

One day, as my jailer came to bring me food, I saw him, in the hope of gaining his keys. But the great rats of the dungeon were ahead of me and they dragged away his body—keys and all.

Shortly after this episode, another prisoner was brought in and chained near me. By the dim torch light I saw that he was a red Martian, and I could scarcely await the departure of his guards to address him.

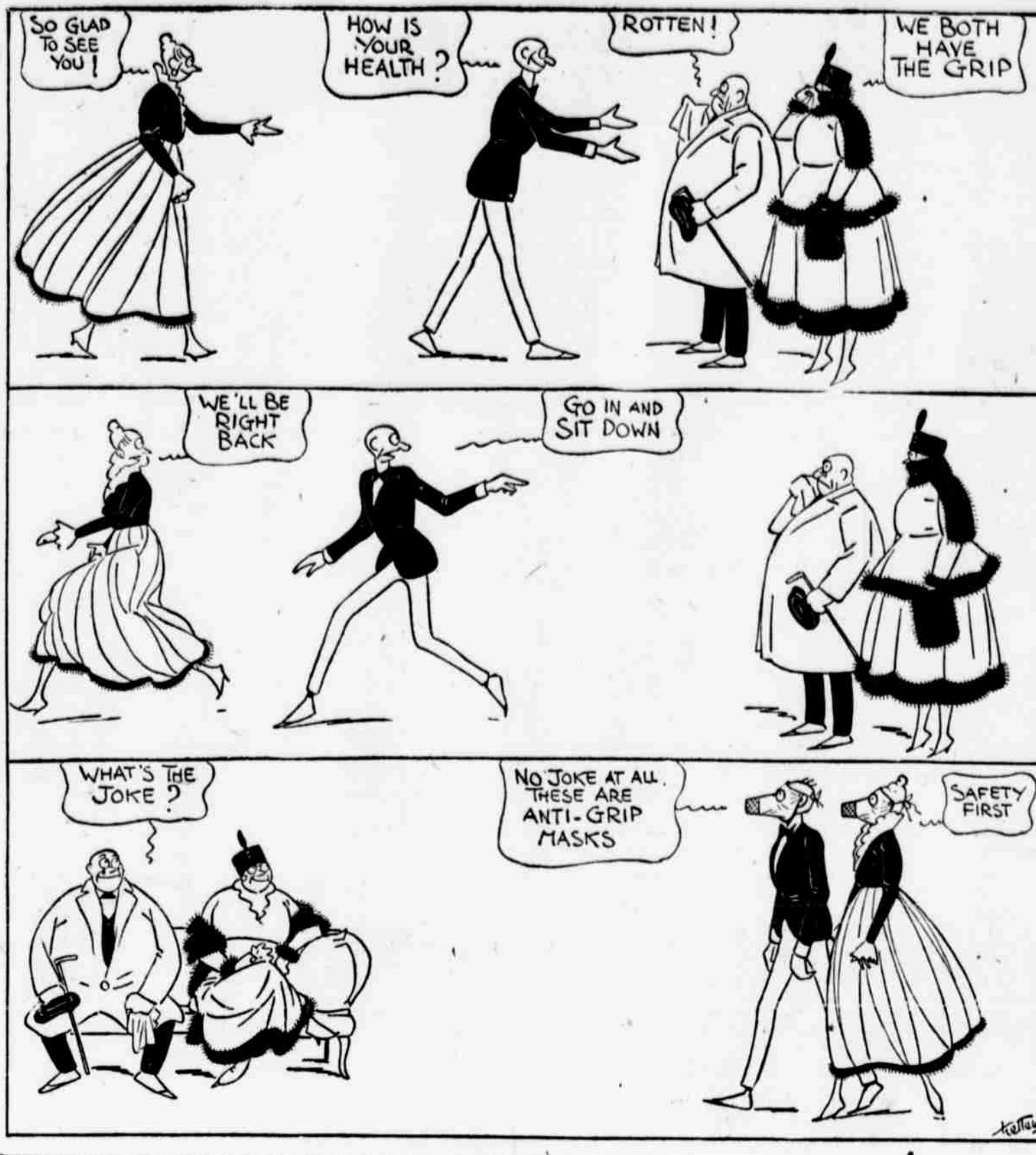
As their retreating footsteps died away, I called out, in the hope of making the Martian word of greeting—"Koor."

"Who are you who speak?" he answered.

## Why Not?

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By Maurice Ketten



"John Carter, a friend of the red men of Helium," he said, "but I do not recall your name."

And then I told him my story, as I have written it here, omitting only any reference to my love for Dejah Thoris. He was much excited by the news of Helium's princess, and seemed quite positive that she and I would be reunited. He said that he would try to find a way to get me out of the city, which the latter made to affront his superior.

He entirely omitted the usual formal salutation as he entered the presence of the jeddak, and as he pushed me roughly before the ruler he exclaimed in a loud and menacing voice:

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"Who are you who speak?" he answered.

Just as I saw the sudden coming of dark I whispered to Kantos Kan to take my sword and my rifle, and as he placed his foot upon my neck and withdrew his sword from my body, I saw the final death blow through the neck, which is supposed to sever the jugular vein, but in this instance the cold blade slipped harmlessly into the sand of the arena.

In the darkness which had now fallen none could tell but that he had really finished me. I whispered to him to claim his freedom and then look for me in the hills east of the city, and so he left me.

When the amphitheatre had cleared, I crept stealthily to the top, and, as the great excavation lay far from the plaza and in an untenanted portion of the great dead city, I had little trouble in reaching the hills beyond.

CHAPTER XIV. Across the Waste.

FOR two days I waited there for Kantos Kan, but as he did not come I started off on foot in a northwesterly direction toward a point where he had told me lay the nearest waterway.

At daybreak of the fifteenth day of my search I was overjoyed to see the high trees that denoted the object of my search. About noon I dragged myself wearily to the portals of a huge building, which covered perhaps four square miles and towered 200 feet in the air. It showed no aperture in the mighty walls other than the tiny door at the left, exposing a short narrow corridor of concrete, at the further end of which was another door, similar in every respect to the one I had just passed.

A second and a third door receded before me and I slipped to one side as the first, before I reached a large iron chamber, where I found food and drink set out upon a great stone table.

Presently the door commenced to recede before me until it had sunk into the wall fifty feet, then it stopped and slid easily to the left, exposing a short narrow corridor of concrete, at the further end of which was another door, similar in every respect to the one I had just passed.

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Presently a dried-up little old man joined me there.

He wore but a single article of clothing or adornment, a small collar of gold, from which depended upon his chest a great ornament, as large as a dinner plate, set solid with huge diamonds, except for the exact center, which was occupied by a strange, stone an inch in diameter, that scintillated in nine different colors and distinct rays—the seven primary colors of our earthly prism and two beautiful rays which, to me, were new and nameless.

I cannot describe them any more than you could describe red to a blind man. I only know that they were beautiful.

The old man sat and talked with me for hours, and the strangest part of our intercourse was that I could read his every thought, while he could not fathom an iota from my mind unless I spoke.

The building in which I found myself contained the machinery which produces the artificial atmosphere which sustains life on Mars. The secret of the entire process hinges on the use of the ninth ray, one of the beautiful scintillations which I had noted emanating from the great stone in my host's diadem.

Before I retired for the night he promised to give me a letter to a nearby agricultural officer who would help me on my way to Zodanga, which, he said, was the nearest Martian city.

"But be sure that you do not let them know you are bound for Helium, as they are at war with that country. My assistant and I are of no country; we belong to all Barsoom, and this tall man, which we wear protects us in all lands, even among the green men—though we do not trust ourselves to their hands if we can avoid it," he added.

"And so good night, my friend," he continued. "May you have a long and restful sleep—yes, a long sleep."

And, though he smiled pleasantly, I saw in his thoughts the wish that he had never admitted me, and then a picture of him standing over me in the night and the swift thrust of a long dagger and the half-formed words: "I am sorry, but it is for the best good of Barsoom."

I made my way by night from the strange house and wandered onward until I met a group of farm folk.

When they had heard my story—I omitted all reference to Dejah Thoris and the old man of the atmosphere plant—they advised me to color my body to more nearly resemble their own race, and then attempt to find employment in Zodanga, either in the army or the navy.

"The chances are small that your tale will be believed until after you have proven your trustworthiness and won friends among the higher nobles of the court. This you can most easily do through military service, as we are a warlike people on Barsoom," explained one of them, "and have our richest favor for the fighting man."

The next few days were spent by Kantos Kan in teaching me the intricacies of flying, and of repairing the daily life contrivances which the Martians use for this purpose.

The fourth day after my arrival at Zodanga, I made my first flight, and as a result of it I won a promotion which included quarters in the palace of Than Kosis.

As I rose above the city I circled several times, as I had seen Kantos Kan do; and then, throwing my engine in to top speed, I raced at terrible velocity toward the south, following one of the great waterways which enter Zodanga from that direction.

I had not been an hour when I was surprised far below me a party of green warriors racing madly toward a small figure on foot which seemed to be trying to reach the confines of one of the walled fields.

Dropping my machine rapidly toward them, and circling to the rear of the warriors, I soon saw that the object of their pursuit was a red Martian wearing the metal of the scout squadron to which I was attached.

A short distance away lay a tiny flyer surrounded by the tools with which he had evidently been occupied in repairing some damage when surprised by the green warriors.

They were now almost upon him, their flying mounts charging down on the relatively puny figure at terrific speed, while the warriors leaned low to the right, with their great metal-shod spears.

Each seemed striving to be the first to impale the poor Zodangan, and in another moment his fate would have been sealed had it not been for my timely arrival.

Driving my feet air-craft at high speed directly behind the warriors, I soon overtook them, and without diminishing my speed I rammed the front of my machine between the shoulders of the nearest. The impact, sufficient to have torn through inches of solid steel, hurled the fellow's headless body into the air over the head of his host, where it fell sprawling upon the moss.

The mounts of the other two warriors turned squealing in terror and bolted in opposite directions.

Reducing my speed, I circled and came to the ground at the feet of the astonished Zodangan.

He was warm in his thanks for my timely aid, and promised that my day's work would bring me all in full merited, for he was none other than a cousin of the jeddak of Zodanga.

We wasted no time in talk, as we knew that the warriors would surely return as soon as the jeddak gained control of their mounts. Hastening to his damaged machine, we were bending every effort to finish the needed repairs, and almost completed them when we saw the two green monsters returning at top speed from opposite sides of us.

When they had approached within a hundred yards, the two beasts became unmanageable and absolutely refused to advance further toward the air-craft which had frightened them.

The warriors finally dismounted, and, hobbling their animals, advanced toward us on foot with drawn swords. The jeddak, who had been the larger, telling me to meet the best he could with the other.

"Finishing my man with almost no effort, as had now from much practice become habit, I made a dash toward the return of my new acquaintance, whom I found in desperate straits."

He was wounded and down, with the huge foot of his antagonist upon his throat and the great long sword raised to deal the final thrust, as, with a bound, I cleared the machine, intervening between us, and with stretched point drove my sword completely through the body of the green warrior.

His sword fell harmlessly to the ground, and he sank limply upon the prostrate form of the Zodangan.

As I was crossing the great square, lost in wonder and admiration of the magnificent architecture and the gorgeous scarlet vegetation which carpeted the broad lawns, I discovered a red Martian walking briskly toward me from one of the avenues.

He paid not the slightest attention to me, but as he came abreast I recognized him, and turning I placed my hand upon his shoulder, calling out: "Koor—Kantos Kan!"

Like lightning he wheeled, and before I could so much as lower my sword he was upon me, his hand on my shoulder, calling out: "Koor—Kantos Kan!"

"Who are you?" he growled, and then as a backward leap carried me fifty feet from his sword, he dropped the point to the ground and exclaimed, laughing:

"I do not need a better reply. There is but one man upon all Barsoom who can bounce about like that. By the mother of the further moon John Carter, how came you here? Have you become a darsen that you can change your color at will?"

"You gave me a bad half minute, my friend," he continued, after I had briefly outlined my adventures since parting with him in the arena at Warhoon. "Were my name and city known to the Zodangans, I would shortly be sitting on the banks of the lost sea of Korus with my revered and departed ancestors. I am here in the interests of Tardos Mor, jeddak of Helium, to discover the whereabouts of Dejah Thoris, our Princess."

"Sah Thon, Prince of Zodanga, has her hidden in the city and has fallen madly in love with her. His father, Than Kosis, jeddak of Zodanga, has made her voluntary marriage to his son the price of peace between our countries, but Tardos Mor will not accede to the demands."

"I am glad that you are here, John Carter, for I know your loyalty to my princess, and two of us working together should be able to accomplish much."

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